

## CLAIMS

1. A method comprising:  
controlling a RIP engine using a first RIP control entity; and  
controlling the RIP engine using a second RIP control entity.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein controlling the RIP engine using the first RIP control entity, comprises the first RIP control entity sending first vector image data to the RIP engine and receiving corresponding first bit-map data from the RIP engine.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein controlling the RIP engine using the second RIP control entity, comprises the second RIP control entity sending second vector image data to the RIP engine and receiving corresponding second bit-map data from the RIP engine.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first RIP control entity includes a RIP manager and the second RIP control entity includes a variable-data-printing manager.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising: transferring control of the RIP engine from the first RIP control entity to the second RIP control entity.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein transferring control of the RIP engine from the first RIP control entity to the second RIP control entity, comprises:  
the second RIP control entity sending a request to the first RIP control entity; and  
the first RIP control entity enabling the RIP engine to communicate with the second RIP control entity in response to the request.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein enabling the RIP engine to communicate with the second RIP control entity in response to the request, comprises:

the first RIP control entity commanding the RIP engine to enter a specific mode of operation; and

the first RIP control entity communicating an IP address associated with the RIP engine to the second RIP control entity.

8. A machine-readable medium comprising instructions for:  
controlling a RIP engine using a first RIP control entity; and  
controlling the RIP engine using a second RIP control entity.

9. The medium of claim 8:

wherein the instructions for controlling the RIP engine using the first RIP control entity, comprise instructions for the first RIP control entity sending first vector image data to the RIP engine and facilitating receipt of corresponding first bit-map data from the RIP engine; and

wherein the instructions for controlling the RIP engine using the second RIP control entity, comprise instructions for the second RIP control entity sending second vector image data to the RIP engine and facilitating receipt of corresponding second bit-map data from the RIP engine.

10. A machine-readable medium comprising instructions for:  
transferring control of a RIP engine from a first RIP control entity to a second RIP control entity.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the instructions for transferring control of the RIP engine from the first RIP control entity to the second RIP control entity, comprise instructions for:

facilitating receipt of a request from the second RIP control entity; and  
commanding or enabling the RIP engine to communicate with the second RIP control entity in response to the request.

12. The medium of claim 11, wherein the instructions for commanding or enabling the RIP engine to communicate with the second RIP control entity in response to the request, comprise instructions for:
- causing the first RIP control entity to command or enable the RIP engine to enter a specific mode of operation; and
  - causing the first RIP control entity to communicate an IP address associated with the RIP engine to the second RIP control entity.
13. A system comprising:
- a first RIP control entity for controlling at least one RIP engine;
  - a second RIP control entity for controlling at least one RIP engine;
  - a controller interface for communicating with at least one of the first and second RIP control entities; and
  - a RIP engine operatively coupled to the controller interface.
14. The system of claim 13, wherein the first RIP control entity includes a RIP manager and the second RIP control entity includes a variable-data-printing manager.
15. The system of claim 13, wherein each RIP control entity comprises:
- means for sending first vector image data to the RIP engine; and
  - means for receiving corresponding first bit-map data from the RIP engine.
16. The system of claim 13, further comprising a printer coupled to at least one of the first and second RIP control entities.
17. The system of claim 13, wherein the controller interface comprises a socket port for communicating with at least one of the first and second RIP control entities.

18. Apparatus comprising:
  - a RIP controller interface for enabling control of a RIP engine by one of at least first and second RIP control entities.
19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the RIP controller interface comprises:
  - at least one socket port for receiving vector image data; and
  - at least one socket port for outputting bit-map data.
20. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the RIP controller interface further comprises:
  - at least one socket port for sending and receiving messages between the one of the RIP control entities and the RIP engine.
21. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the messages exclude vector image data and bit-map data.
22. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the RIP controller interface comprises:
  - at least one socket port for receiving vector image data; and
  - at least one socket port for outputting bit-map data.
23. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the RIP controller interface further comprises another socket port of receiving vector image data.
24. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein each socket port includes a Transmission Control Protocol port.
25. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a RIP manager for communicating with the RIP controller interface; and a RIP engine for communicating with the RIP manager via the RIP controller interface.

26. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a variable-data-printing manager for communicating with the RIP controller interface; and a RIP engine for communicating with the variable-data-printing manager via the RIP controller interface.

27. Apparatus comprising:  
first means for controlling a RIP engine; and  
means for enabling control of a RIP engine by one of at least the first means for controlling the RIP engine and a second means for controlling the RIP engine.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, further comprising the second means for controlling the RIP engine.

29. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the first means for controlling the RIP engine comprises a variable-data-printing manager.